

## **City Council to see impact of creative forces on economy**

**Mike Greenberg**

**6/9/05**

### **Express-News Staff Writer**

To bolster support for a long-range cultural plan dubbed the Cultural Collaborative, which will be presented to the City Council for formal acceptance today, the city's Office of Cultural Affairs released key findings of a study Wednesday that shows the benefits of the arts community to the economy. The study by Trinity University economics professors shows that arts companies and other creative enterprises contributed \$1.2 billion to the local economy in 2003.

It also found total wages of \$319 million paid to 11,888 employees in creative industries in San Antonio.

Richard Butler, who prepared the study with Trinity colleague Mary E. Stefl, described the findings as "conservative."

The study included only companies in the fields of design and advertising, museums and collections, performing arts, schools specializing in the arts, and visual arts and photography.

Data limitations excluded individual artists, Butler said, and some industries with creative components, such as software, were assigned to other sectors. The study did not include newspapers and other media or the arts programs at local colleges and universities.

He did not have comparable studies for other cities, but he said of the \$1.2 billion economic impact, "That's a big number. I think a lot of people are going to be surprised."

At a presentation of the study's findings to news media and arts supporters Wednesday afternoon, the cultural plan drew supportive words from outgoing Mayor Ed Garza, Mayor-elect Phil Hardberger, City Councilman Roger O. Flores, County Judge Nelson Wolff, Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce President Joe Krier and Hispanic Chamber of Commerce President A.J. Rodriguez.

Although the council will be asked only to accept the study today, full implementation will require an additional \$2.8 million in city funds over the next three years, including an additional \$500,000 a year in grant money for arts organizations.

Asked about the prospects that the requested increase would survive the city's budget process this summer, Flores said, "It depends on the philosophy of our new council members and how they feel the arts impact our city."

Hardberger, whose mayoral campaign had stressed the importance of the arts, said, "I am going to support the Cultural Collaborative all the way through."